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Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8368th meeting
Wednesday, 10 October 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Llorentty Soliz	(Bolivia (Plurinational State of))
Members:	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Ms. Edjang Mangue
	Ethiopia	Mr. Woldegerima
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2018/874)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2018/874)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Colombia to participate in today's meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/874, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Arnault.

Mr. Arnault: I am grateful for this occasion to present the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2018/874). It is a great pleasure to be able to do so in the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, and one of our closest partners in the Colombian Government, Mr. Emilio José Archila, High Counsellor for Post-Conflict.

I am also pleased to inform the Council that since the Secretary-General's report was issued, the key mechanisms provided for the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace — in particular, those provisions on the reintegration and security of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) — have resumed their work for the first time since the start of the new Government. They include the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement; the National Reintegration Council; the technical board to oversee the security of former combatants; and the working group on legal guarantees.

The Mission participates in several of those mechanisms, and we welcome the spirit of cooperation that has been prevailing in the meetings of those bodies. We trust that spirit will be sustained in the weeks and months to come. As the Secretary-General has said several times, reintegration in the current circumstances in Colombia is a very complex task, and both sides have an important role to play in completing it successfully. As those bodies resume their work, a short assessment of where reintegration stands seems in order, together with a review of the challenges ahead in their various aspects: political participation, security, economic opportunities and legal guarantees.

With regard to political participation — a central aspiration of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) and a driving consideration behind its decision to negotiate an end to the conflict — we take a positive view of the current situation. Eight of the 10 FARC representatives afforded seats in the two chambers of Congress have assumed their responsibilities and are contributing to the debates and the legislative activities of these bodies. We welcome the collegial spirit that is being displayed in Congress in spite of sharp political differences. We also note that the financial difficulties that undermined FARC participation in the elections at the beginning of this year have been largely overcome. We appreciate the fact that the efforts of President Duque Márquez to build political consensus on policy issues have included FARC members of Congress.

In relation to physical security, Council members have noted from the Secretary-General's report the stark contrast between the situation of those former guerrillas who are under security measures provided by the State, and those who are outside their scope. While not incident-free, the security perimeters that protect the designated areas where reintegration is taking place have been effective, as have been the close protection teams granted by the National Protection Unit of the Ministry of the Interior to hundreds of FARC leaders and residents of the reintegration areas. I note that the

goal in the peace agreement of training and recruiting 1,200 close protection personnel is nearing completion. A significant number of those personnel are women — a first in the National Protection Unit.

To address security risks outside the training and reintegration areas, the police are providing former members of the FARC-EP with training in self-protection. The National Protection Unit, the security forces and the Mission have deployed tripartite teams to 18 departments where groups of reintegrated combatants are present. Those teams monitor closely the security situation in those areas and take action as required. With the number of FARC-EP members killed outside the Government security umbrella now reaching 74 since the signing of the peace agreement, it is obviously imperative that those measures soon make a difference.

Economic reintegration remains today a subject of serious concern. The vast majority of those in the process of reintegration still have no clear economic prospects beyond the monthly stipend that is to end by August of next year. The resumed National Council on Reintegration has therefore a huge task before it, in the difficult circumstances of a much wider geographical dispersion of the former members of the FARC-EP. To succeed where the previous Council failed, it needs a solid consensus on its approach to productive projects, land and the proper mix of collective and individual reintegration.

Some of the lessons learned from the past year are shared between the Government, the FARC and ourselves. They include the need to connect reintegration much more directly to local development, to empower local authorities, and to link up more systematically with the private sector, universities and other actors willing and able to assist with long-term reintegration. Resources will, of course, be critical. We have taken note that the Government's budget proposal for 2019 provides that public spending on reintegration be maintained at the same level as last year. We hope that Congress will uphold that proposal. I should add that the Mission and the United Nations as a whole will continue to do their utmost to support effective reintegration. In that respect, I would like to acknowledge the countries whose voluntary support has enabled the Mission and the United Nations country team to step up their contribution to productive projects.

In addition to the need to broaden and accelerate economic reintegration efforts, a heightened subject of concern at this point is the sense of legal uncertainty that remains pervasive among former FARC-EP members. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's previous report (S/2018/723), that sense of uncertainty has dogged the reintegration process over the past couple of years owing to the controversy surrounding the peace agreement and the protracted political, legal and constitutional debates over the establishment of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. While the ruling from the Constitutional Court last August upheld the powers of the Jurisdiction, it has not removed the persistent questioning of its role in some sectors. That is not a situation unique to Colombia. Reconciling peace and justice is a controversial and emotional issue everywhere. To overcome it, the Colombian peace process has sought to innovate by bringing together the full guarantees of due process, victims' participation and the benefits of restorative sanctions. That is a promising solution to an old and difficult dilemma.

Those magistrates who bear today the heavy responsibility of providing truth and reparation to victims and reliable access to transitional justice for participants in the conflict are deserving of the respect and support of State institutions, and the full cooperation of all persons under their jurisdiction. They are also deserving of the support of the international community. It is the field of conflict resolution as a whole that will benefit when the Special Jurisdiction succeeds. Of course, once again financial support is a critical dimension. I welcome the fact that the funds assigned to the system of court lawyers attached to the Jurisdiction were just made available. We also note that the Government has proposed a slightly increased budget for the three bodies that make up the system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition, and we hope once again that Congress will endorse that proposal.

Unfortunately, the tragic killing of social leaders continues. Over the weekend, in the department of Cauca, the coordinator of a coca crop substitution committee was killed, together with his two sons. The fact that this leader was promoting a Government-sponsored programme that is part of the peace agreement illustrates the brazenness of the killers and the pressing need to mobilize State institutions for the prevention and prosecution of those crimes. We fully share the sense of urgency expressed by the President,

the Attorney General, other national and departmental authorities, as well as civil society, who subscribed in August to the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders. As a first step towards translating that commitment into action to stop the killings, we look forward with anticipation to the action plan under preparation by the Government to implement the national pact.

Before concluding, on behalf of all the staff of the Verification Mission in Colombia I would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Colombia, to FARC and particularly to the Council for its support for the extension of our mandate. We believe that we have contributed to overcoming several of the implementation challenges the peace agreement has faced and to preserving confidence in the future. The new Administration has decided to take on the great responsibility of carrying the peace process forward. The Mission and the United Nations as a whole are committed to continuing to do our part to ensure success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Arnault for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council wishing to make statements.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault for his briefing, which chimes very closely with our own assessment and analysis of the developments over the past three months. Let me also warmly welcome Foreign Minister Trujillo to the Security Council for the first time.

The United Kingdom welcomes Colombia's continued commitment, clearly set out by President Duque, to implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. As we have all said many times in this Chamber, the agreement represents an opportunity for lasting peace in Colombia, as well as being a positive example to the rest of the world.

Like Special Representative of the Secretary-General Arnault, we also welcome the steps taken by the new Government so far, including the commitment to pushing ahead with the effective reintegration of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), as well as the appointment of key officials in important institutions for the peace process, in particular the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and the National Reintegration Council. We share the Secretary-General's hope that Colombian institutions will continue to pursue the peace process, including security, development and the rule of law in conflict zones, an effective justice system and reparations for victims and the essential commitment to those who have laid down their arms.

Recent progress in the investigation of initial cases by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been a key step in achieving those goals, and we encourage all parties to support the extremely important work of that institution, but as the Secretary-General has said, the challenges ahead remain formidable. We are particularly concerned by two important and concerning trends.

First, the departure of several former FARC-EP commanders from some of the territorial areas for training and reintegration has highlighted weaknesses in the reintegration process. We agree with the Secretary-General that economic reintegration activities need to resume on a larger scale and faster than has been the case to date and that the security of members of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común must be assured.

Secondly, we share the Secretary-General's concern about the expansion of illegal economies, the competition of criminal groups for territorial control and the persistence of violence, which is continuing to claim the lives of human rights defenders and social leaders. We welcome President Duque's commitment to tackling those issues, and look forward to those who signed the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders on 23 August, implementing their commitments.

With that in mind, we welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We hope and believe that the Verification Mission will continue to play an important role in maintaining confidence and cooperation among the parties and encouraging them to work together on peace implementation. For our part, the United Kingdom is fully committed to working with the new Colombian Government, just as we did with the last, as Colombia works towards securing a lasting and sustained peace.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and

the important briefing by Mr. Jean Arnault and we commend the work he and his team are doing. We also welcome the participation of Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and Mr. Emilio Archila, High Counsellor for Post-Conflict.

Peru follows with special attention and firmly supports the peace process in the sister Republic of Colombia. We underscore the country's commitment to building sustainable peace, and the steps taken by the Government of President Iván Duque to implement the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace on the basis of national consensus.

We welcome the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, which reflects the will of the parties to continue to enjoy the qualified support of the Organization, as well as the unity of the Council in its support for the peace process. In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation for the work of Mr. Arnault and his team.

We also welcome the appointment of senior officials to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, the National Reintegration Council and the National Commission on Security Guarantees. We believe that this should revitalize the established mechanisms for implementing the peace agreement.

We also highlight the new Administration's initiative to work on a pact against corruption with all political parties and with civil society. We consider it to be a top priority for the Government to convene and lead national efforts on this key theme for building a peaceful, just and inclusive society. In our view, all of these developments are good news and allow us to look optimistically towards the future and to address the challenges posed by the process in issues related to security, the reintegration of former combatants and the rule of law.

With regard to the security situation, we underscore the importance of the national pact in which the country's political forces condemn the assassinations of political leaders and human rights defenders that regrettably have occurred. In that context, we stress the importance of the measures adopted in the so-called territorial areas and of close protection mechanisms to counter the presence of criminal groups in rural zones throughout the territory.

We also underscore the need for the Attorney General to carry out timely investigations of the cases before him and to ensure access to justice. We commend the work of the Ombudsman, particularly through the early-warning system, and the importance of close coordination with other relevant national institutions in order to reduce the vulnerability of women, children and ethnic minorities.

As for the reintegration process, we note the transformation of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo into a political party and its participation in democratic life. We also note the recent visit of the Senate Peace Commission to a territorial area for the training and reintegration of ex-combatants in San Vicente del Caguán. Additionally, the increased allocation of resources for their socioeconomic reintegration, with a territorial and communal focus, will undoubtedly promote economic development and the reconciliation process. In that connection, we welcome the recent visit to the country of a Peacebuilding Fund mission.

We want to highlight the fact that more than 77,000 Colombian families have signed voluntary crop substitution agreements. Our own experience in alternative development has demonstrated the effectiveness of such initiatives as long as participating communities have the full support of the national authorities. We highlight the support of the mission for reintegration programmes and its strategy to implement the recently adopted Security Council resolution 2419 (2018), on youth, peace and security, and commend its work with civil society and UN-Women to promote the participation of women in dialogue and reconciliation.

On the rule of law, we underline the important role of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in promoting access to justice and national reconciliation in Colombia.

In conclusion, I welcome the progress made in the Colombian peace process, which serves as an example to the rest of the world and is of crucial importance for consolidating Latin America and the Caribbean as a region of peace.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, for his insightful briefing today on the outstanding work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. I also welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, who is participating for

the first time in a public meeting of the Council on Colombia since the new President of Colombia was inaugurated in August.

The implementation of the historic Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) is now entering a new stage. In the wake of the political changeover following the legislative and presidential elections, whose organization we have already commended, the new Colombian authorities must now continue to implement the commitments made in the framework of the peace agreement, in particular the reintegration of ex-combatants and security guarantees, as monitored by the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Like previous speakers, France welcomes the recent decision of the Government of President Duque to fill key positions in institutions in charge of reintegration, in accordance with the peace agreement. In the context of that the change of Administration — a sign in and of itself of the vitality of Colombian democracy, independent of the positions adopted by the political parties — I wish to make three observations.

First, I want to note the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which is the pillar of transitional justice. The independent Jurisdiction has the responsibility of giving assurances both to victims and to participants in the conflict in the framework of a comprehensive system of justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition. The ambitious choice of signatories of the agreement, which is an important innovation and could ultimately be transposed or adapted to other conflicts, requires judges to be allowed to carry out their juridical duties independently and, above all, that the Jurisidication's operational rules not be changed.

France has had the opportunity on several occasions to demonstrate its commitment to the pillar of transitional justice, and I believe it important to stress that the new Colombian authorities, who have shown their determination to keep Colombia on the path of peace and prosperity, continue to preserve the independence of the Special Jurisdication for Peace and to do their utmost to bolster the system of justice, truth, reparation and non-repetition.

My second point has already been raised in previous meetings but remains relevant. I refer to the deterioration of the security situation in former conflict zones. That insecurity affects former FARC-EP combatants, who are now the targets of criminal groups seeking to extend their area of influence. It also affects social leaders, human rights defenders and those who participate in coca crop substitution programmes. Their murders must be vigorously condemned. Improving the security situation in zones previously controlled by the FARC-EP is a major challenge that the new Colombian Government must address in order to reap the dividends of peace. Although some measures have been taken in that regard, France encourages the Colombian authorities to redouble their efforts to provide public services in those areas and thereby build long-term peace. In that connection, we welcome the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, adopted on 23 August.

Thirdly and finally, the successful implementation of the peace agreement will depend on the success of economic reintegration. Too many revenue-generating projects initiated by ex-combatants have failed for lack of support. All relevant State services must therefore be mobilized to give ex-combatants the opportunity to contribute to the economic development of their country. Key elements for development and reintegration include access to land. Progress in this area in particular is anticipated following the commitments undertaken by the Government of Colombia, because it is those lands that will definitively turn the page on 50 years of conflict and testify to the commitment of ex-combatants to improving their country.

The people of Colombia and their new Government, represented today by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, can count on the full and fraternal support of France in this period of building a historic peace.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, for his briefing today and for the very valuable work he is doing. We continue to strongly support the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

I also want to welcome Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo. We are very grateful for his commitment to the peace effort and we know his personal dedication to this issue, based on his very long experience, including as former Peace Commissioner.

The Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in Colombia is the result of a historic process, aimed at ending more than

50 years of conflict and violence. Colombia has proved that through leadership, dialogue and diplomacy, even the most difficult conflicts can be brought to an end. At a time when too many conflicts are becoming more entrenched, Colombia is an important inspiration to the world. It also provides a very clear example of how a united Security Council can contribute to peace.

President Duque and the leadership of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) should be praised for their sustained political will and dedication to the peace process. Their determination to implement the peace agreement has provided an opportunity to bring peace, socioeconomic development, security and the rule of law to all parts of Colombia. Although an irreversible course for peace has been set out, many challenges remain. As very often after a complex and long-standing conflict has been resolved, that is to be expected. The continued engagement of all parties is now crucial. To address the underlying causes that have fuelled conflict and violence for so many years, outstanding issues must be resolved. In that regard, we are pleased to see that appointing members to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement was one of the first actions of the new Government. The Commission is without a doubt the appropriate forum for taking those discussions forward.

Following conflict, as Jean Arnault just said, it is often challenging to strike the right balance between peace and justice. At the same time, it is an issue of decisive importance for sustainable peace. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, with its objectives of guaranteeing truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition, is a key component of the agreement. Its independence and autonomy must be fully respected. Cooperation among all parties continues to be essential in enabling progress on that central aspect of the agreement.

The transformation of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) into the FARC political party has been a central part of the peace process. For the peace agreement to remain credible, it is critical that effective and adequate protection be ensured. It is also an important component if the agreement is to serve as a model for other efforts, including for the process with the National Liberation Army (ELN). The killing of human rights defenders, community leaders and FARC-EP members and their families reportedly continues unabated. That is of grave concern and underscores the need for the State to fill the power vacuum and safeguard the rule of law. We therefore welcome the national pact for life and for the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, adopted on 23 August.

Bringing security, development and the rule of law to conflict-affected areas is critical. We welcome President Duque's emphasis on more focused and tightly coordinated action by State agencies. A stronger presence of civilian authorities and agencies providing services to communities should be paired with efforts to improve security in conflict-affected areas. The necessary resources must be made available for bringing Colombian institutions to all parts of the country, as well as for mobilizing civil society, communities and the private sector. The international community should give all possible support to that endeavour.

We continue to stress the importance of the full political, legal and socioeconomic reintegration of former members of the FARC-EP. That includes implementing productive projects, as well as addressing the key issue of access to land. We welcome President Duque's firm support for more effective reintegration.

On the ELN, we welcome continued direct contact between its members and the Government. Sweden, as a member of the Grupo de Países de Apoyo, Acompañamiento y Cooperación a la Mesa de Conversaciones, will assist the process as much as it can.

We welcome the commitment of Vice-President Marta Lucía Ramírez to maintaining dialogue with women's groups. Effectively implementing the gender provisions of the peace agreement remains crucial for achieving sustained peace. We also hope that the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia will become a best-practice case study when it comes to youth and the implementation of resolution 2419 (2018), which we follow with great interest.

In conclusion, Colombia has travelled far on its path towards peace. It is now crucial that it stay the course and that all parties continue to do their part. The unwavering support of the international community, including the Council, remains critical. We must collectively ensure that this historic opportunity can bring peace and prosperity to all Colombians and that Colombia continues to serve as an inspiration to the world.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I join my colleagues in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to the Security Council. My delegation also thanks Special Representative Jean Arnault for his informative and much needed briefing.

Kazakhstan welcomes the unanimous extension of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to 25 September 2019. We commend the Mission's continued hard work on the ground and reiterate our full support for its work in securing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace and ensuring lasting peace and reconciliation in Colombia.

We welcome the commitment of the Government of Colombia to implementing the peace deal in order to bring stability and security to the country. The nomination by President Iván Duque of top Colombian officials to revitalize the Government's participation in the tripartite commission that monitors the country's peace process with the demobilized guerrillas of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejercito del Pueblo (FARC-EP) demonstrates the Government's sincere intentions to implement the peace agreement. In that context, we particularly commend the adoption on 23 August of a broad-based seven-point national pact for life and for the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge that no peace process is an easy task to implement at once. To succeed, the firm commitment and participation of all stakeholders are required. Obviously, the Colombian peace process is no exception or any different. We are aware of the obstacles caused by the threat of dissident and paramilitary groups that intend to take control of former FARC-EP territories.

We are also deeply concerned about the continued violence committed against social leaders, community activists and human rights defenders. In addition, the current vulnerable security situation and socioeconomic reintegration of former FARC-EP combatants and their family members could very well jeopardize their reincorporation into society. However, it is our strong belief that, despite existing setbacks and impediments, the continued commitment of Colombia's new Administration to fighting corruption and guaranteeing the more effective socioeconomic and political reintegration of former FARC-EP rebels into society will bring about positive results.

Furthermore, harnessing innovative approaches and strategies, utilizing confidence-building measures, building trust, engaging in practical disarmament and non-proliferation, addressing the scourge of terrorism, promoting the rule of law, creating the potential for interlinkages between security and development, including at the regional level, supporting crop-substitution policies and rural reform, as well as providing security guarantees to vulnerable groups, will secure the gains achieved thus far. We are confident that it will definitely be conducive to the success of the peace process. We therefore call on all parties involved to comply with their obligations and work in the interest of security and stability. We urge the international community to stand ready to support Colombia in its priority goal to bring about peace and accord to all Colombians. We also look forward to a definitive bilateral ceasefire with the National Liberation Army, which would end decades of armed conflict for good.

Lastly, Kazakhstan pledges to do its best in the context of multilateral efforts to bring about peace and progress in Colombia.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): First, allow me to thank Mr. Jean Arnault for his very detailed and informative briefing and the Secretary-General for his most recent report on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2018/874). I would also like to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Carlos Trujillo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Colombia.

We are satisfied to see the first promising steps by the Government, as embodied in the resumption of the work of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implemenation of the Final Agreement and the National Reintegration Council. It is good to see that the new Administration is shouldering its responsibility in implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, with regard to security guarantees and reintegration. Moreover, we welcome the commitment made by Vice-President Marta Lucía Ramírez to maintaining dialogue with women's groups. It is of vital importance to ensure the effective implementation of gender provisions outlined in the peace agreement with regard to security guarantees and reintegration.

We agree that while the peace process is not exempt from serious challenges and has been marked by

political controversy since its inception, the perception of the peace agreement's importance for the country's future has grown. We hope that Colombian institutions will continue to pursue what is at the core of the peace agenda: security, development and the rule of law in the zones affected by conflict; an effective system for truth, justice and reparation to the victims; and the essential commitments made by those who laid down their arms.

We cannot fail to mention our concern about continued insecurity and violence in some conflict-affected areas, including the assassination of social leaders and human rights defenders. We welcome the signing of the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders on 23 August and look forward to its prompt and inclusive implementation.

We cannot stress enough the importance of the full political, legal and socioeconomic reincorporation of former members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). We are concerned about the current pace of the reincorporation process, especially in its economic dimension, as well as killings of former FARC-EP members. Legal and security guarantees are needed for former FARC-EP members in order to strengthen their confidence in the peace process. We continue to support the work of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and other transitional justice processes that are playing a critical role to protect the rights of victims and the overall success of the peace process.

Political reintegration remains one of the brightest elements and successful examples of the peace agreement's implementation. Representatives of the political party, the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), are playing a vital role in the newly sworn-in Congress. However, two out of 10 seats remain unoccupied. We hope that the issue of allocating the remaining seats will be shortly resolved by the relevant institutions. We also hope that the Review Chamber will have a chance to independently consider the case of Jesús Santrich, which remains highly divisive in terms of political opinion, especially when it comes to former members of the FARC-EP.

We note the Secretary-General's call on the Government to make the necessary resources available for critical investments. We also call on the international community to remain closely engaged to support and encourage the effective implementation of the peace agreement.

Unfortunately, widespread coca cultivation is still one of the looming obstacles. There is an undeniable connection between drug trafficking and widespread insecurity in some regions near strategic drug-trafficking routes. According to the latest report of the Secretary-General, if it is not properly addressed, it will continue to be a source of violence and pose a threat to the peace process. In that connection, we once again highlight the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service in Colombia and other efforts aimed at putting an end to the suffering of people caused by the widespread presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

We want to express our full, continuous support for the peace process in Colombia. We must remind ourselves that Colombia's peace process remains a source of inspiration for efforts in many parts of the world to end conflicts and build peace. The most recent request of the Government of Colombia and the FARC party to renew the Mission's mandate demonstrates their commitment to see the process through to its successful conclusion and that they trust the Mission can contribute to this end.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate our support and appreciation for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean Arnault, and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jean Arnault for his important and detailed briefing today. We warmly welcome Foreign Minister Trujillo García and the other Colombian guests.

The historic peace accord that ended half a century of fighting in Colombia brings us together today. The United States welcomes the unanimous renewal of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia last month. We join the Security Council in our enthusiastic support for peace in Colombia, but the success of the peace process is, in turn, dependent upon other areas of progress. Nevertheless, we believe that this is truly a time of rebirth for Colombia. President Duque Márquez said it well when he introduced himself to the General Assembly a couple of weeks ago (see A/73/PV.8), identifying himself as a member of a new generation of Colombians committed to uniting his country around common goals.

The continuing success of peace in Colombia is caught up in the achievement of those goals. One of the goals mentioned by the President is economic and social growth based on democratic institutions — and, indeed, the Colombian Government is extending governance, justice and economic opportunity throughout the country. It is providing security infrastructure and public services to the rural regions that were most affected by the war. That work is critical to the peace process.

Expanding equal justice in Colombia means ensuring accountability for serious crimes committed during the years of armed conflict. It also means doing more to investigate and prosecute the killing of human rights defenders. We are encouraged by the early efforts of President Duque Márquez to protect social leaders and others who are vulnerable in Colombia today. The literal silencing of those important voices undermines the peace process. Another goal that will help determine the success of peace in Colombia is doubling down on the fight against drug trafficking and the criminality and corruption that flow from it. The news in that regard is good, but progress is incomplete.

When President Trump put out the Global Call to Action on the World Drug Problem, during a high-level week event, Colombia was one of the first countries to answer the Call. Our Colombian friends stand shoulder to shoulder with us in fighting the epidemic of addiction that afflicts us all, and we understand what a difficult fight it is. The United States is working to reduce the demand for illicit drugs. Colombia is working hard to reduce the supply, but they must do more. Cocaine production surged last year, a trend that must be reversed if we are going to achieve our joint goal of cutting coca cultivation and cocaine production in Colombia in half by the end of 2023.

Finally, the future of the peace process in Colombia depends on that country's ability to continue to deal with the massive influx of desperate Venezuelans. In his speech to the General Assembly, President Duque Márquez said the crisis was a question of self-determination of the Venezuelan people. We could not agree more. The Maduro Moros regime has robbed the Venezuelan people of control over their lives and their future. The people of Colombia and their Government have responded with great generosity to the approximately 1 million Venezuelans who seek food, medicine and shelter in their country. The United States has helped with nearly $55 million in humanitarian aid, but real relief for both the Venezuelan and the Colombian peoples will not come until after the Maduro regime. That day cannot come soon enough.

The United States stands with President Duque Márquez and all Colombians as they seek to build a more peaceful future. Colombia has emerged as a strong democratic partner for the United States, a partner in building a freer and more democratic western hemisphere. We are excited to witness the birth of a new Colombia, and we are committed to helping it achieve a peaceful and prosperous future.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jean Arnault for his comprehensive briefing and for the tireless efforts for peace by him and his team. Let me also welcome to the Security Council Colombia's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, as well as the High Counsellor for Post-Conflict, Mr. Emilio José Archila.

The presence of the Minister today is a demonstration of Colombia's continued partnership with the United Nations in support of durable peace. The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of four autonomous countries, including Aruba and Curaçao, which are close maritime neighbours of Colombia. A close friendship exists between our peoples, and our Prime Minister, Mark Rutte, looks forward to his visit to Colombia in November, together with high-level delegations from Aruba and Curaçao. I assure Mr. Trujillo that the Kingdom of the Netherlands is fully committed to peace in Colombia, which we support both politically and financially.

Today's discussion comes soon after the mandate renewal of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. The joint request by the Colombian Government and the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) to extend its mandate reaffirm their sustained commitment to the peace agreement and to sustainable peace. The implementation of the Final Peace Agreement remains a challenge. It can succeed only with the full attention and commitment of the Colombian Government and the other parties involved. In that light, I will address three issues today: first, the importance of an inclusive approach; secondly, socioeconomic and legal reintegration; and, thirdly, the security situation.

My first point concerns the need for an inclusive approach. In his inauguration speech, President Duque

Márquez expressed the intention of his Administration to bring Colombians together, seek consensus and overcome polarization. We applaud his expressed commitment to inclusivity. We call upon the Colombian Government to engage with civil society and foster ownership and inclusivity of the peace process, while including women and youth. Inclusivity is particularly important for marginalized and vulnerable groups, such as the indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community. We welcome the resumption of the work of the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement and the National Reintegration Council. We also welcome the meeting held by President Duque Márquez with representatives from indigenous communities and his expressed commitment to promote indigenous development. We also appreciate the efforts of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, the Colombian authoriti non-governmental organizations to implement the relevant gender provisions of the peace agreement. We underscore the need to continue to prioritize gender-mainstreaming. The engagement of youth is similarly important. The project of the youth-led organization BogotArt entitled "Letters for Reconciliation" promoted an exchange of letters between students and former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP). That very important project was awarded the Youth Carnegie Peace Prize at The Hague last month. The project shows that peace in Colombia is much more than an agreement signed by the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP. It is also a process of reconciliation among all parts of civil society.

That brings me to my second point, which is the need for socioeconomic and legal reintegration. The reintegration of former combatants of the FARC-EP represents a core pillar of the peace agreement. Stimulating income-generating activities and providing social services can address the root causes of conflict, promote self-reliance and sustain peace. We therefore call on the Government and the FARC to expedite the design and effective implementation of a comprehensive reintegration strategy. The provisions for transitional justice are another core pillar of the peace agreement. We underline the critical importance of the independent and effective functioning of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. It is a key institution for guaranteeing victim's rights and ensuring transitional justice.

That brings me to my third point, namely, the security situation. We are deeply concerned about the continued high level of insecurity in the areas that were most affected by the conflict. Restoring comprehensive State authority, with the presence of both civil and military institutions, is a key priority in that regard. Violence against former FARC-EP combatants strikes at the core of the peace agreement. In our view, it is essential for the Government to uphold their security guarantees. The ongoing and increased number of assassinations of social leaders and human rights defenders remains alarming. Mr. Arnault spoke of that in his briefing, and we thank him for that clear statement. It is unacceptable that those Colombians who have the courage to stand up for human rights are made to pay the highest price. Let me underline the statement of our Swedish colleague in that regard. We welcome the adoption of the pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders. We look forward to its urgent follow-up to ensure effective prevention and protection, as well as to ensure the prosecution of perpetrators. We encourage the Government and the National Liberation Army to continue to assess the scope for peace negotiations and maintain an open line of communication. The Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to support that process.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

In conclusion, let me emphasize that the signing of the peace agreement marked a historic success and serves as an inspiration throughout the world. Colombia must now spare no effort to ensure that peace become permanent, as peace is much more than an agreement. Peace must be inclusive, based on ownership by civil society and respect for human rights. Peace is grounded on effective State institutions that provide security, respect for the rule of law and development. Peace attracts investments that are directed towards shoring up public capacities. Peace requires sustained commitment together with the pledge to ensure reconciliation and a safer future that includes Colombians from all sectors. As Colombia's neighbour, the Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to continue its support for the peace agreement and its effective implementation.

Ms. Edjang Mangue (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by congratulating the delegation of Bolivia on its outstanding presidency of the Security Council and expressing our praise for Mr. Arnault and his team for his briefing. We also commend and are grateful to His Excellency Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García and his team for joining us today.

The environment that has prevailed with regard to the major political events in Colombia this year, such as the most recent legislative elections and the June presidential elections, is encouraging and building confidence within the international community vis-à-vis the peace process in the country. That reflects not only the will of the people and of the parties involved in the process, but also the substantial work of the United Nations. Equatorial Guinea reaffirms its support for the Government of President Duque Márquez and harbours the hope that his Government will strengthen its commitment to promote a dynamic encouraging the peace process, upon which the future of millions of Colombians depends. In that regard, we welcome the recent appointments to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement, the National Commission on Security Guarantees and the National Reintegration Council, given their importance with regard to the Final Agreement. Similarly, we commend recent statements by the President in which he highlights his firm support for the reintegration and increased effective participation of former combatants in the peace process and the adoption of the pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders as a response to continued assassinations of community leaders in conflict zones.

We nonetheless are concerned about actions that tend to hinder the increasing progress by the parties involved in the process, as well as about the departure of several former combatants from the territorial areas for training and reintegration in the south-eastern region. The competent local entities must investigate and thoroughly assess the concerns that led to that action and formulate an expeditious solution, while considering that such inappropriate and continued withdrawal could create a new gap, which would be unhelpful to the peace agreement.

We welcome the fact that the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has opened its first cases. The unhindered functioning of that body is essential for ensuring accountability, above all for crimes committed in the past. Kidnappings and violent acts that affected Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities, including extrajudicial executions, must be duly addressed. In that regard, we underline the gesture by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo in August 2017 in handing over assets to provide reparation to victims. We also commend the fact that that judicial process enjoys the cooperation of various State and non-State actors.

According to the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/874), illicit economies based on drugs and mining are continuing to add to the violence in Colombia and pose a threat to the peace process. According to data provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, it is estimated that more than 77,000 families have signed voluntary substitution agreements under the national comprehensive programme for the substitution of illicit crops. Thanks to those agreements, several thousand hectares of coca have been destroyed. We hope that the Government will promote those types of motivational programmes for those families and others who join that initiative.

It is regrettable that the sixth round of talks between the Government and the National Liberation Army (ELN) was not able to reach definitive agreements. The inclusion of the ELN is important to guarantee a comprehensive and secure peace process in Colombia. In that regard, we invite the parties to work towards facilitating conditions that will lead to the next round of talks and take into account the points already agreed upon.

As we said at the meeting on 26 July (see S/PV.8319), the chief guarantor of national unity and the balance of State institutions, by virtue of the attributes conferred upon them by law, is the Government, which must ensure that the needs of the people are met in order to defuse possible divisions and overcome the challenges the country faces.

Before concluding, I would like to express Equatorial Guinea's willingness to work towards the peace process in Colombia, as well as extend our praise and recognition for the excellent work that the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia is carrying out to encourage and strengthen that process in support of the Colombian people.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Carlos Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, who is present with us today for the first time. I also want to thank Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his valuable briefing and comprehensive presentation on the major achievements and challenges facing the Colombian peace process. We also commend

the steps taken by the Government of President Iván Duque Márquez to continue with the implementation of the Colombian peace process. We look forward to the development plan, which will be submitted by the President in November. In my statement, I will focus on three key issues.

First, the socioeconomic reintegration of former members of the Fuerza Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) has been lagging, while there are negative repercussions from the withdrawal of former leaders of the FARC-EP from the reintegration process as a result of the risks that the process may pose to their personal security and legal status. However, we commend the relentless efforts of the Colombian Government to assess and adopt a special integrated approach to implement the reintegration process. We value the role of the Mission in that regard and its work with the Resident Coordinator, the High Commissioner for Peace and the leadership of the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC) to submit a joint proposal to the Peacebuilding Fund on socioeconomic reintegration and reconciliation.

Secondly, with regard to the security situation, we are concerned about the ongoing killings, violence and threats against social leaders, human rights defenders and indigenous leaders. In that regard, we commend the pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, which was adopted by the Colombian Government, in addition to the preparation of guidelines on the policy to be established, which would provide security guarantees to local communities, human rights defenders and social leaders.

Thirdly, we welcome the ongoing efforts by the Mission under Mr. Arnault, in cooperation with national, regional and local authorities, as well as civil society organizations, the private sector and the international community. We also applaud the positive role of the Mission in communicating with women's groups and organizations and promoting dialogue with them. We commend as well the adoption of a strategy to implement resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), on youth, peace and security, with a focus on the role of young people pertaining to reintegration and assurances. That would protect them both during and post-conflict and ensure their participation in peace processes and measures that will greatly contribute to the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security.

We appreciate the current cooperation between the Colombian Government and the FARC. That was demonstrated by the request submitted to the Security Council to renew the mandate of the Mission and by the adoption of Council's resolution 2435 (2018), reflecting the belief of both parties in the Final Peace Agreement and the Council's belief in the importance of supporting it.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the support of the State of Kuwait to the Colombian Government and the peace agreement that ended a protracted conflict and paved the way to a stable and lasting peace. We encourage the Colombian Government and the FARC to resume the implementation of the ceasefire agreement and to reach an agreement that meets the aspirations of the Colombian people and ends the current instability, which has lasted for many years in Colombia.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting, and I welcome Foreign Minister Trujillo García to the Chamber. I would also like to thank Special Representative Arnault for his briefing.

Colombia's presidential and parliamentary elections were recently held smoothly, and its peace process has yielded some positive progress. China appreciates the effort made by former President Santos, the Colombian Government and other relevant parties. I also appreciate the fact that since President Duque Márquez's inauguration, the new Colombian Government has made efforts to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the country, formulate a new national development policy and commit to implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, with the aim of continuing to promote the peace process in Colombia. That will help to realize peace and development in Colombia and is also very significant for the maintenance of peace and stability in the whole region. For the next phase, Colombia still needs to comprehensively implement the peace agreement and achieve the reintegration of former combatants into society, including into political and economic aspects of life. At the same time, Colombia is still facing security challenges such as organized crime and drug trafficking. Achieving social and economic development will continue to be a long and arduous task.

Against that backdrop, China hopes that all parties in Colombia will further consolidate a consensus on

maintaining State security and stability, achieving development, firmly promoting the peace process and working to solve differences through dialogue and negotiation. The stage that the Colombian peace process has reached today did not come about easily, and it is an example of the Security Council's cooperation in responding to regional hotspots. The Security Council should work together with the international community, continue to strengthen its support to Colombia, respect the leadership of the Government and the people and provide constructive assistance to Colombia in its peace process.

China is grateful to Special Representative Arnault and the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia for their contributions to promoting the peace process in Colombia over the past year. We welcome the recent adoption of resolution 2435 (2018), which renewed the mandate of the Mission for a year. We hope that the Mission will further strengthen communication with the Colombian Government and the relevant parties, work to address the reintegration of former combatants and guarantee the security of the conflict-affected areas, as well as promote mutual confidence among all the parties in Colombia and positively implement the peace agreement.

China would like to work with all other members of the Council to support the Verification Mission in the implementation of its mandate, advance the peace process in Colombia and make our contribution to realizing comprehensive peace and stability in Colombia as soon as possible.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the convening of today's meeting to consider the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/874) on the latest developments in the situation in Colombia and the activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. We warmly welcome Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, whose presence reflects the importance that the Colombian authorities attach to the ongoing peace process in their country. We also thank Mr. Jean Arnault, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, for his comprehensive briefing.

My delegation would like to comment on the following points in the report: the recent progress in the implementation of the peace process, the difficulties that have been encountered and the prospects for the future. With regard to recent progress, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the Colombian authorities' determination to continue to cooperate with the Mission with a view to achieving a just and lasting peace. In that regard, we were pleased to note the letter to the Security Council from the Colombian authorities, in agreement with the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común (FARC), requesting the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission, which was due to end on 26 September.

We also welcome the various initiatives launched by President Iván Duque Márquez since his accession to the presidency of Colombia with a view to promoting a new dynamic in the peace process. They include appointments to commissions established under the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, the signing of the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders, and the strengthening of social dialogue.

My country commends the commitment of all Colombian institutions to providing adequate responses to key issues related to security, the promotion of human rights in conflict-affected areas, and the truth, justice and reparation system. In that regard, we welcome the adjustments and clarifications made by the Constitutional Court to the relevant provisions of the peace agreement when assessing their conformity with the Constitution. We also welcome the holding of the first hearing of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, and the referendum on the proposals to address terrorism and corruption and promote transparency, held at the initiative of several political parties and with the support of President Duque.

With regard to the difficulties facing the peace process, my delegation is concerned about the violence that has persisted throughout the country. We are sorry to note the insecurity in areas where training and reintegration centres for former combatants are located, which is forcing them to leave the centres. A number of pressing and sensitive issues also require sustained attention, as they are a source of concern for the Council. They include delays in implementing the process for the economic reintegration of ex-combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, the growing illegal economies, clashes between illegal armed groups for the control of territories, and the issues of victims'

rights and the Special Jurisdiction's independence and financial autonomy. All of these call for urgent action on the part of the Colombian authorities and the international community.

In terms of responding to the difficulties with the peace process, my delegation urges the Colombian authorities to redouble their efforts to implement the peace agreement together with the FARC, including through measures to restore trust. In that regard, it is imperative to strengthen the State's presence in all the conflict zones and to accelerate the process of economic reintegration by providing adequate financial resources. Furthermore, while welcoming the steps already taken in the field of security, my delegation encourages the Government to continue its efforts to resolve this thorny issue. We also urge the new Colombian authorities to engage in discussions with representatives of the National Liberation Army.

My delegation believes that significant progress has been made. We therefore urge the Security Council to support the peace and reconciliation efforts of the Colombian people and their Government. In that regard, my country reiterates its support to the Verification Mission and the United Nations country team in Colombia for their commitment and the work they have already accomplished. We particularly commend the efforts in the area of peacebuilding and related issues. In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire assures the Colombian authorities of its willingness to work with them to ensure the success of the peace and reconciliation process.

Mr. Woldegerima (Ethiopia): We thank Special Representative Arnault for his briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2018/874). We are very pleased to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, who is here with us this morning. The commitments made by the new President of Colombia during his inauguration certainly sent a positive message to all who closely follow the implementation of Colombia's Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. Real commitments were made to supporting the more effective integration of former combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), as noted in the Secretary-General's report.

The signing of a broad-based seven-point national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders was also a big milestone in addressing the main challenge to the implementation of the peace agreement. We believe that the new Government's commitment to bringing development, security and the rule of law to the conflict-affected communities in a more coordinated and focused way is the most important decision that it has reached to date with regard to consolidating the gains made so far.

We know that Colombia is still facing so many challenges in making the terms of the peace agreement a reality, and the Council should continue to provide all the necessary support to the Colombian parties in addressing those challenges and expediting the full implementation of the agreements. As the Secretary-General's report indicated, the departure of several former FARC-EP commanders from training and reintegration areas, especially in the south-eastern region, is a worrying sign. The underlying reasons for that departure should therefore be addressed as quickly as possible.

We are also aware of various sensitive issues, including the delays in the socioeconomic reintegration of FARC-EP combatants into civilian life, the issue of illicit economies, the continued killings of community leaders and former FARC-EP members and other issues highlighted in the report that might potentially create difficulties for the efforts aimed at consolidating peace in the country.

With regard to the negotiations between the Colombian Government and the National Liberation Army, we are encouraged by the report that the two parties have concluded a sixth round of negotiations. While that is good progress, the parties should continue to engage in constructive dialogue with a view to reaching a permanent peace agreement. We commend Special Representative Arnault and the United Nations personnel in Colombia for all their efforts in support of the peace agreements. We also reiterate our appreciation to the countries of the region and other international partners that continue to closely support and monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. Finally, we want to take this opportunity to reaffirm our continued support to the full implementation of the Colombian peace agreement and stand in solidarity with the people and Government of Colombia as they continue their march towards sustainable peace.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Given that this is my first meeting under your

presidency, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, and wish you every success during the month of October. We welcome the presence in the Chamber today of Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, to discuss this important issue, and we thank Mr. Jean Arnault, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Colombia, for his detailed briefing and his assessments.

The report of the Secretary-General presented today (S/2018/874) reflects the situation on the ground reasonably objectively and therefore leaves a twofold impression. On the one hand, during the year that the Verification Mission has been operational there have been significant changes for the better. The rebel movement has been transformed into a political party, there have been parliamentary and presidential elections and the Special Jurisdiction for Peace has been launched. It will be important to consolidate and develop all of those achievements. On the other hand, in the past three months, starting right when the previous report (S/2018/723) came out, the direction that the situation has taken has aroused a certain degree of concern. The report shows a lack of progress in areas that are important to ensuring stability, such as civilians' security and the implementation of reintegration programmes. There is still a great deal of work to be done to create the conditions that will enable the population to have stable and legal incomes. And there are also problems with Parliament's representativeness. Two of the parliamentary seats that the Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común was guaranteed under the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace are still unoccupied.

Urgent action is also needed to investigate and prevent murders and attacks on the civilian population, which now includes former rebels. Partly as a result of the fact that those problems are still unresolved, many ex-combatants are taking up arms again for their own security. Around 10 per cent of the combatants who acceded to the peace agreement have already returned to the rebel ranks. If anyone thinks that number is insignificant, I should point out that among them are five former high-ranking members of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo, and that does not include field commanders. The National Liberation Army is also closely following this situation.

We have already said that the only thing that can halt this trend is additional efforts on the part of the Government to meet its commitments under the peace agreement. We realize that some of the delay in resolving the issue is linked to the period of transition to a new administration. In that context, we are pleased to note the Secretary-General's very positive assessment of the commitment of Colombia's new President, Mr. Iván Duque Márquez, to the ex-combatants' socioeconomic, political and legal reintegration, which represents three key elements of the peace agreement. It was the agreement and its central element, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, that made it possible for the Secretary-General and the Security Council, whose own authority is invested in the business of ensuring peace in Colombia, to support the peace process. The peace agreement is therefore the only international legal foundation for a settlement, and we hope that all of those who signed up to it will maintain their commitment to it. We are grateful to the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, under the leadership of Mr. Arnault, for monitoring the implementation of the agreement, and we supported the Council's adoption in September (see S/PV.8351) of resolution 2435 (2018), which extended the Mission's mandate for another year.

Here in the Security Council it has frequently been emphasized that the normalization of the situation in Colombia is an example of effective cooperation between the United Nations and a host country. It is the sense of national responsibility and the desire to find politically sustainable solutions shown by Colombians that have made peace in their country possible. For our part, we will continue to support the people and the Government of Colombia in the work of building a stable peace and post-conflict development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

First of all, we cordially welcome Mr. Carlos Holmes Trujillo García, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, and Mr. Emilio Archila, High Counsellor for Post-Conflict. We would like to take this opportunity to express Bolivia's support for the task ahead of consolidating Colombia's long-awaited peace. We would also like to welcome Mr. Jean Arnault, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and to thank him again for his commitment to peace and to our region.

Together with the beginning of the mandate of the new Colombian Government, we are also witnessing a new stage in the peace process, in which the commitment to implementing the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace in order to effectively reintegrate ex-combatants of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) into civilian life is crucial to the entire peacebuilding agenda in Colombia.

In what has now been almost two years, Colombia has seen a definitive ceasefire between the Government and the FARC-EP, the laying down of arms, a significant drop in the levels of violence, the formation of a new political party and its participation in this year's electoral process and assumption of its new legislative duties. We must always keep in mind the magnitude of what has been achieved in order to be sure that this process is irreversible. And although the tasks ahead are not simple, we must reaffirm the commitment that we all have to the Colombian people.

We are encouraged by President Duque Márquez's positive statements and by the measures he has taken in these initial months, among which we want to highlight the appointment of high-level officials to the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. The role of Colombia's institutions in the implementation of the agreement is essential, and we encourage them to continue working on that process. The presence of the High Counsellor and Foreign Minister Trujillo in the Council today is a clear sign of the new Government's willingness to continue working with our Organization and the international community to build a stable and lasting peace in Colombia.

My country is of the view that the peace agreement is also an opportunity to comprehensively address the fundamental problems in Colombia by seeking to eliminate the deep-rooted historical discrepancies between rural areas and cities, and the poverty, inequality and absence of the State in the areas affected by the conflict.

All the progress we have made in implementing the agreement has taught us important lessons about our ability to address Colombia's challenges. To briefly mention the issues that my country believes are urgent, the first is that respect for the independence and autonomy of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace must be ensured and victims' right to truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition guaranteed. It is also vital to eliminate the uncertainty and fear that FARC-EP ex-combatants feel with respect to their legal guarantees, and to ensure their access to transitional justice.

Secondly, regarding security guarantees, as the Secretary-General says in his report (S/2018/874), the competition of criminal groups for territorial control and the expansion of illegal economies has allowed violence to persist in the areas that were under the control of the FARC-EP. We firmly condemn and express our deep concern about the assassinations of social leaders, former FARC-EP members and human rights defenders. We believe it is essential to expand the presence of public law enforcement beyond the reintegration areas. We also encourage compliance with the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders agreed to on 23 August.

Thirdly, with regard to the numbers related to progress on economic reintegration, of the dozens of projects proposed for almost 14,000 ex-combatants, only 17 have been approved and two funded. It is vital that the National Reintegration Council resume its activities. Support is also needed for productive projects and for generating income for FARC-EP ex-combatants, for which access to landownership, among other things, is crucial. In that regard, we of course reiterate the call for ensuring that the United Nations agencies in the country are well coordinated with the rest of the international community. The initiative of Vice-President Marta Ramírez highlights the importance of the economic empowerment of women in this process. Promoting and supporting gender and ethnic perspectives and the role of young people in reintegration processes is vital to the proper implementation of the peace agreement.

Finally, I would like to emphasize our unwavering commitment to the Colombian people, in this and other forums and through our observers on the ground, and to the objective of continuing to contribute to our brother country of Colombia's attainment of its long-desired peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

Mr. Trujillo García (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I want to thank the Ambassador of Bolivia for convening

this briefing, as well as Mr. Jean Arnault for his briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/874).

This being the first time that I am addressing the Security Council, on behalf of President Iván Duque Márquez I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General and to all the members of the Security Council for their continued support to Colombia through the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, whose mandate has been extended unanimously.

Our recent elections gave President Duque a clear democratic mandate to lead our national Government for the next four years on the pillars of legality, equity and entrepreneurship. The mandate supports the unquestionable commitment of President Duque and his Government to peace, stabilization and consolidation, that is, to strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, creating greater opportunities for economic development and sustaining and expanding social progress. That commitment goes further than the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed in 2016 by the Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP), and above all corresponds to the values and principles of the Constitution of 1991.

The agreement with the FARC-EP is an opportunity that Colombia must take advantage of. As President Duque indicated in the general debate of the General Assembly a couple of weeks ago,

> "Peace is an objective of all Colombians and all of us, absolutely everyone, will work decisively for it. However, peace needs to be built with the rule of law, which combines the public goods of security and justice. Our Government is going to work so that the process of demobilization, disarmament and reinsertion put forward in the past few years will go forward successfully." (*A/73/PV.8, p. 23*)

There are many challenges facing the Government of Colombia with regard to the implementation of the Final Agreement. Among other things, we are dealing with a disconnect and a lack of funding, as is reflected in the Secretary-General's report. That situation requires corrective measures, which will be publicly announced and carried out through institutional routes with the aim of ensuring that the implementation of the Final Agreement is truly conducive to its intended goal of peace, stabilization and consolidation. All the high-level Government bodies with responsibilities in the areas of public order and citizen safety are fully committed to that objective, not only with regard to former FARC-EP combatants, but also in order to fully ensure the human rights and democratic freedoms of all Colombians.

We agree with the Secretary-General's report that it is bad news that some of the leaders of the former FARC-EP guerrillas who were in the areas used for training and reintegration have abandoned their duty to actively support the process. From this Chamber, we urge them to return to their original course of action and not to stray down a path of violence and illegality.

The assessment of the economic reintegration process has acknowledged its uncertain progress, and we share the concerns about it. We therefore intend to adopt a new approach, with the aim of making up for lost time and ensuring that the process has greater impact, which will enable us to meet the expectations that former combatants have of becoming full citizens, meaningful members of their families and economic actors contributing to the development of their communities.

The social and economic integration of former combatants is central to the implementation of the Final Agreement, and our Government is aware of that. However, as we work on it, it will be crucial to closely coordinate all stakeholders, including State authorities, the private sector, international assistance and United Nations agencies. At the same time, combating the cultivation of illicit crops is particularly urgent, given its unprecedented expansion in recent years, as the Secretary-General's report mentions. The fight against illegal economies in all their forms and manifestations is key to stabilizing Colombia and strengthening peaceful coexistence. Our Government is committed to making intelligent and responsible use of all the tools and resources available to it within the framework of the Constitution to tackle this problem, which threatens not only the successful implementation of the Final Agreement but also the integrity of our institutions and our citizens' security.

We were pleased to note that the Secretary-General's report recognizes the importance of some of the initiatives that President Duque's Government has undertaken, such as the national pact for life and the protection of social leaders and human rights defenders. In formulating the pact, we made progress on the adoption of a comprehensive social policy that

includes early-warning alerts, quick-reaction protection mechanisms, risk-prevention models and instruments aimed at ensuring the effective punishment of perpetrators of crimes against people from various walks of life who are contributing to their communities' well-being. We hope that this will ensure that acts such as those of last week will not be repeated.

The Government of Colombia stresses its willingness to begin a dialogue with the National Liberation Army as long as the conditions that have been repeatedly outlined are met — that is, the release of kidnap victims and a unilateral end to committing verifiable criminal acts.

President Duque is aware of the deficiencies in the peace agreement's implementation and his entire Cabinet is already working to resolve them. His Government's peace agenda is the Constitution's peace agenda, and although it goes far beyond the peace agreement, it acknowledges that its implementation is a valuable and essential opportunity. We will therefore make sure that we do not sacrifice that opportunity to the failures and problems that the current Administration is facing at its start. In that endeavour, we will continue to underscore the issues of gender, ethnicity, children, victims and justice. To that end, the support that the Council and its members, together with the international community, can continue to give us is crucial to ensuring that our future generations inherit a fairer, safer and more equitable and enterprising Colombia.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.